



Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee on H.B. 6659 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefore

February 23, 2023

Co-chairs Senator Osten and Representative Walker, Ranking Members Senator Berthel and Representative Nuccio, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am here today because H.B. 6659 fails to acknowledge that we have an emergency. And our **children** need you to oppose this bill.

My name is Latasha Benjamin, and I am a Pastor of Greater Glory Ministries in Hamden. I am also a proud member of FaithActs for Education.

When I testified earlier this month, I spoke about the emergency that plays out every day. Connecticut is really two Connecticuts – the first Connecticut is filled with privileged and well-funded public schools. In the second, underfunded and under-resourced Connecticut, our kids are suffering.

I live in the second Connecticut. The families that I Pastor to in our church on the New Haven/Hamden line live in the second Connecticut.

This budget fails to address their suffering.

It does not close the shameful racial funding gap.

It turns a blind eye to pervasive inequity.

Emergencies require urgent action. We need it in the form of fair funding. Without it:

- The third-smallest state in the country will keep supplying funding that is **miles** apart for children who live only miles apart.
- Our education system will continue to fail our children, especially those in the second Connecticut, where I have 10-year-olds struggling with their sight words.
- And a Black child in Mississippi will continue to get a better education than a Black child in Connecticut.



Fixing an emergency takes money, and the budget must reflect the critical funding we need for education.

I urge you all to oppose H.B. 6659.

Pastor Latasha Benjamin
Vernon, Ct 06066

Greater Glory Ministries
266 Morse Street
Hamden, CT 06514

FaithActs for Education
857 Post Road, Suite 310
Fairfield, CT 06824